Bursting of the Weir of the Manchester Water Works.—On Sunday week, in consequence of heavy rains, the Headon weir, and the Woodhead reservoir below it, were successively filled to overflowing, so far as already formed, and the massive coping of the weir, with some 10,000 or 12,000 feet of earthwork from the Woodhead embankment, were carried away by the pressure acting on an uncompleted structure. The land adjoining was, of course, flooded, and much further damage was done to mills and bridges. The water works at Woodhead are very extensive. The embankment across the valley, damming up five or six considerable mountain streams, is about a mile and a half in length. The weir above it, on the Headon brook, was a massive stone structure, with top boards removable during floods, but unfortunately without attendance at the time, so that a stream of about 1,000 cubic feet in a second was allowed to accumulate against the weir till its coping was washed away, and the reservoir below overflowed. The latter had been raised to about 24 feet above the level of the pipes. The cost of the several works to the Corporation of Manchester, when completed, is estimated at not much less than a million sterling. The loss to the contractor by the present casualty will be heavy, and it will require about two months to reinstate the works destroyed. Mr. J. F. Bateman is the engineer.

Peat Charcoal to Sweeten the Metropolis.—Mr. Jasper Rogers made a further demonstration of the deodorizing powers of Irish peat charcoal, at the Mechanics' Institution, Chancery-lane, on Monday last, when experiments were exhibited that certainly did appear to bear out his enthusiam in the good cause which he desires to promote. Indeed, the fact that charcoal has a very remarkable power of absorbing immense quantities of deleterious gases, and of thereby even restoring corrupted animal food for instance, purifying and sweetening foul, water, &c., has long been familiar to us; but it is the peculiar power of peat charcoal, and above all of Irish peat charcoal, to absorb the odour and moisture of sewage precipitate, and convert it into dry and inodorous 'poudrette' manure, for which Mr. Rogers contends.

Birmingham Workhouse Competition.—In consequence of receiving congratulations on my approaching marriage to a lady of whose existence I was and am unaware, I was induced to refer, upon my recent return from the continent, to a letter from a correspondent, which appeared in No. 347 of The Builder, when I found to my great surprise an announcement to that effect, together with other calumnious aspersions, only to be excused as uttered doubtless under the momentary sting and irritation of bitter disappointment. The truth is, I neither have now, nor at any time have had, the slightest acquaintance with any of the guardians, the architects, or their families, beyond the fact of having met Mr. Drury once only upon other business, and then in the presence of two professional men, which was prior to my having any idea of my appointment as one of the selecting architects, and at which time I was not even made aware of his being a competitor. I beg leave also to deny most unequivocally the existence of "an architect's name" upon any of the plans reported upon at the time of our inspection, and allow *me* also to assert, that the whole of such plans *were* in *strict accordance* with the instructions issued by the Board. Permit me further to affirm that I was (as I believe were Messrs. Edge and Stevens) perfectly ignorant of the names of the authors until they were publicly announced, and we were actuated with but one common feeling, which was to do impartial justice to the architects and the public, and that duty we most conscientiously discharged.—I am, Sir, &c.

John Gibson.

*** For the personal statements denied by Mr. Gibson and Mr. Edge, we are in no way responsible. We offer the author of them the opportunity of substantiating his charges, although we would prefer to let the matter end here, and in the event of his not doing so previously to our next publication, shall feel ourselves at liberty to forward his name to the parties concerned. Our own views and statements remain precisely as they were.

Machine for Joiners.—A machine for mortising, boring, &c., has recently been patented in this country, by Mr. William Furness, of Lawton-street, Liverpool. It is the invention of Mr. J. A. Fay, an eminent American engineer, and has recently been brought to a state of great perfection. One has been made by Messrs. E. F. Bellhouse and Co., of Manchester. According to our informant, it is on the principle of the slotting machine for iron, but with a power of adjustment of the point of the tool which enables a great variety of work to be done by it. The chisels employed are peculiar in shape, not being solid like the ordinary mortice chisels, but flat like the common joiners' chisels, with the edges turned up at right angles, so that the chips are drawn out of the mortice, after the hole has been cut. The machine can be used with any size of chisel from an eighth of an inch up to two inches; it will also set out and mortice naves for wheels not exceeding 10 by 15 inches. Pins and dowels are made by it. It can be made to operate either by foot or steam power, and one machine, it is said, will perform the work of eight men. The cost of the machine is about 20*l*. The inventor of this machine has also invented a machine to make tenons, and execute rabbeting, sash scribing, and boring in any kind of wood.

Lille.—A statue is in progress here by subscription, in honour of General Negrier, who fell at the barricades in Paris, June, 1848. It is in bronze, from Bra, the sculptor, in Paris. The works of the new Town-house are advancing rapidly. The Museum of pictures, &c., is open to the public two days per week, viz., Thursdays and Sundays. There are some good pictures by Claude, Rubens, Salvator Rosa, Leonarda da Vinci, Vandyke, and some by modern artists, Roqueplan, Delaroche, &c., which are very good. Also some very remarkable sketches by the old masters, presented to the town by the citizen Wicar. Although the collection is but small, it is not a bad place to spend an hour in. In the course of the restoration of a church at Tournay, some interesting discoveries have been made.

The Industrial Exhibition of all Nations.—On Wednesday a large assemblage of gentlemen met at the Mansion-house, by invitation from the Lord Mayor, to receive a deputation on this subject, when Mr. H. Cole submitted an outline of the proposal, and resolutions were agreed to for the promotion of the object in view. We need only now repeat the caution which we have already felt it our duty to offer, and in which we perceive that the *Times*, in noticing the report of this meeting in its columns, fully concurs, that the utmost care be taken in the selection of those to whom the management of the affair, and the choice of prizes, must be left, so that all chance or even insinuation of jobbery may be obviated.

Baths and Washhouses are likely to be, ere long, established, for behoof of the working classes, at Oxford. A subscription list has been set agoing, and has been headed with a donation of 50*l*. by the keeper of the Ashmolean Museum.——The directors of the Wolverhampton Subscription Baths Company have, out of twenty-three sets of designs, fixed on one by Mr. G. T. Robinson, of Wolverhampton. It is in the Lombardic or Romanesque style of tenth century. There will be a tepid swimming bath, 70 feet long by 30 wide, with a cold plunging bath, 20 feet long by 10 wide, with numerous dressing rooms. A staircase leads to a gallery partly encircling the tepid bath. Private baths will be attached.

Suggestion for Scaffolding.—Having frequently observed accidents to happen from the putlogs of scaffolding coming away from the wall of a building, a suggestion has occurred to me, which if published in your journal, may be the means of saving life for the future during the operation of building. This improvement consists in making a slit in the end of the putlog, before placing it in the wall; if a hard wood wedge be then driven into the slit just in face of the wall, a much more secure fastening would be effected than is obtained by the means hitherto adopted. The putlog may be further bound round with iron at a certain distance from the end to prevent the wood splitting further than is required. E. J. P.

Alleged Glut of Labour in South Australia.—A young man whose correspondence, dated from Adelaide, appears in the *Bradford Observer*, states that on inquiry he finds that "there are more men of all trades and professions than can get work; there are scores of carpenters, masons, bricklayers, plasterers, &c., who are out of work, simply because there is no work for them. The immense influx of emigrants continually coming in has completely overstocked the market. The four classes of tradesmen named receive 7*s*. 6*d*. per day; day-labourers earn 4*s*. 6*d*." Provisions appear to be as cheap as heretofore.

White Zinc.—The French Government, according to Galignani, has recently ordered that in future the white paint used in public buildings shall be made of white zinc, instead of white lead. Considering the injurious results of the use of paint made from white lead, adds the same authority, and the dreadful effects that the lead produces in the manufactories where it is prepared, it is much to be hoped that the example set by the Government will be followed by the public.——A poor fellow, seized with painter's cholic while grinding white lead with colours, at a shop on the Quai Napoleon, the other day, committed suicide to end his sufferings.

The Britannia Tube.—The final lift of this tube was successfully accomplished on Monday last. It is now 3 feet above the permanent level,—a circumstance requisite to enable the engineers to join it on to the end or land tube, before laying it down on its bed plates and rollers when placed beneath it. This process will occupy other three weeks. It is intended by the directors to give some cheap excursion trains periodically to the Straits, to enable the middle and humbler classes to visit the tubes. Two additional cylinders have been cast for the lifting of the next, as a reserve. All the preparations are complete for the floating, which will take place about the middle of November. The day fixed for the transit of the first train over the Straits is the 1st of March next.

Gutta Percha.—The first ship ever fairly loaded with this now staple article of commerce, for British import, is the *Bangalore*, recently arrived in the London Docks, with 500 tons of it from the East Indies. This most plastic and useful substance has of late been applied to the conveyance of water into Birmingham, and found, it is said, to be quite well adapted to the purpose.

Water.—We would direct attention to an advertisement in our paper, convening a public meeting at the Hanover-square Rooms, on Monday evening next, for the purpose of taking into consideration the best means of improving the water supply of the metropolis.

Competitions.—Advertisements have been issued for plans, &c., by 1st November, of a workhouse at Bradford for 300 inmates, besides vagrant ward and fever shed—particulars as advertised; and by a date not specified, for designs and drawings for a Blind Institution at Birmingham.

Wall Paintings, Bishop Tawton's Church, Barnstaple.—It may be interesting to you, and worth a remark in The Builder, that in the restoration of the north aisle of Bishop Tawton's Church, which is going on under my direction, a series of interesting frescoes (?), in a good state of preservation, have been discovered. They cover the whole of the north side, and are surrounded by a border of good design. One compartment represents St. Christopher carrying the infant Saviour over a river: in the other hand is a staff much resembling the stock of a fir-tree with the branches lopped off. Another compartment represents St. Michael weighing departed spirits with one hand, and wielding a sword with the other,—the dragon is under his feet; in this compartment there is also a female figure, which, I think, is intended to represent the Virgin interceding, as the scale on that side is down. The whole of the plastering has not yet been scraped off, but as soon as this is done, I purpose making a correct reduced drawing of the whole, with reference to the restoration of those parts now defaced. Some idea of the size of these paintings may be formed when it is considered that the principal figures are upwards of 10 feet high. R. D. Gould.

To learn how to use PDF Compression and OCR visit our website